

Whitefish Area Trust Land Plan Advisory Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Location: North Valley Hospital Conference Room

Facilitator: Alan Elm

Agenda Topics

Meeting called to order at 6:05 PM by Alan Elm.

Alan moved to approve minutes from April 22, 29 and May 6. With no corrections, motion passed.

Update on contract negotiations with Marty Zeller was given by Marshall Freedman. The committee reviewed the concerns with the proposal from Gary Hall. Marshall will clarify and add the language "not to exceed" where appropriate, i.e. expenses.

Questions of fund raising and DNRC commitment lead to a discussion of the Helena meeting earlier in the week. Marshall and Alan were in Helena to meet with Jeannie Holmgren, David Greer's boss, and Tom Schultz, who is Jennie's boss. \$10,000 is being dedicated by DNRC to this project. Leesa asked about left over funds, \$15,000 from the original donor. Marshall explained that the money needs to be returned to the donor and a letter will go to donor asking for the money be reissued to us for the project.

In regards to Gary Hall's concerns, the committee feels comfortable moving forward with the noted changes. We, as a committee have made the commitment to the project and will move forward with or without Zeller's involvement. For additional funds, Gary is asking the county and Donna is asking her resources. Marshall stated \$4,000 has been donated so far from the fund raising efforts.. For the \$10,000 from the DNRC, the current contract will have to be divided so a straight contract between DNRC and Zeller is completed. Charlie asked if we did not raise all the needed funds, would Zeller give us what he has worked on to date? Marshall will clarify that point.

The contract talks about ownership in section III. Contract Provisions, #4. Marshall will clarify the wording with Zeller. Paul asked whose name goes on the contract? Not sure of the legal ramifications. How did they do it in Castle Valley? The 501 (c) (3) Flathead Gateway Partners has just been filed. It could take 6 months. There is a concern since it will be a new organization and no one knows them. Donations not accepted until the 501 (c) (3) filing is completed.

Marshall met with Montana Land Reliance (MLR) since they have a 501 (c) (3) to explore if we could use them as a pass through. They work with conservation and raise money to purchase conservation easement. We have been assured they would not be looking over our shoulder. Amy, from MLR, stated they would accept donations, pay bills and give a monthly accounting. They were approached because as a pass through, donations through them would be tax deductible. The Chamber's pass through cannot be tax deductible since they are a (c) (6). Concerns were brought up about us being perceived as a partner of Montana Land Reliance which would not be good. If the project fails in the eyes of the public, it gives people a finger to point at. They carry some political baggage. We started out as local group protecting local area and it could turn to something else. Does National Park Association have the same imagine as Montana Land Reliance? The committee feels they do.

Alan asked about Whitefish Community Foundation as a pass through and Charlie will verify their position. The committee feels most comfortable with Whitefish Community Foundation. Andy will talk to John, the City Attorney, regarding who should sign the contract. Charlie asked about the breakout of charges from the \$60,000 used by Janet. Lisa stated it has been requested.

Leesa move to proceed with Zeller's contract with the stated changes, seconded by Andy.
Motion carried. No opposition.

Lisa and Sheila reviewed the Scope of Work for the task forces. We will send the document to Zeller to verify this is the direction he expects from the task forces. Thoughts from the group about the process: we should bring in outsiders that would help in the research such as leaders from recreation and timber harvest. Recreation should be split from Land Use and made its own task force. Water should include watershed and surface water.

Task forces were formed and captains are bolded

Recreation: **Leesa**, Jeff G, Tyler, and Marshall

Economic – **Sheila**, Charlie, Leese, Donna and Andy has some suggestions for community experts.

Fire – **Bick Smith**, Rob, Richard, Greg Poncin,

Land Use – **Lisa H**, Paul, Charlie, Andy, Diane C

Wildlife – **Greg G**, Steve L, Jeff G, and Norm as a resource

Water - **Steve L**, Greg G, Rob, Chris Refatule, and Jerry Johnson

We will start meeting less as a big group. Start each future Thursday meeting with the task forces meeting individually and wrap up with the group advisory committee meeting.

Charlie suggests we start some publicity. Andy talked about the weekly radio program with Wendy. Suggestion made we each take turns writing a letter to the editor to get information out to the public. Alan will call the Pilot and see what is possible. Bryon Schott, a PR specialist, thinks the group might benefit from a targeted PR program. Marshall talked about what has already been on TV. This last Monday, David Greer was interviewed. He presented a position on school system in which the DNRC is the savior, using example of parcel 36 and David stated, DNRC will move forward and save the system. Alan was interviewed and did a great job of putting out a good message representing the advisory committee. Also interviewed were Bob Sandman and Andy F. Another avenue for PR is the Whitefish Free Press.

The group discussed the contract for minute taking. Jen is asking for a formal action by the committee on her current contract of \$25 an hour. She is willing to drop her hourly rate to \$20.00/hr. Greg and Richard stated \$20 is fair since she is a contract employee. The majority of the committee stated \$15 is fair market value and we should not be going over that range. Discussion involved our other expenses such as mapping for \$3,000. Greg stated a concern that \$45 a week doesn't show we appreciate her. The group reiterated that this is a business decision. There was unanimous agreement that Jen has been a great asset to the team and her work is appreciated; however, the donors would question us offering above market price for this service. The question of why we need minutes was brought to the table. Lisa feels this group is quasi judicial and minutes of the meeting should be recorded. The group discussed volunteers and if one of the team could take minutes and still take an active role in the meeting. Donna stated she would be willing to take the minutes if the decision to use a volunteer is what the group votes on.

Alan moved to pay Jen \$15.00 an hour for a total of 4 hours a week unless otherwise determined that additional services are needed and then authorized by the coordinator team of Lisa H and Sheila B. Charlie seconded. Motion passed. Greg voted in opposition of the motion.

Alan and Marshall were in Helena to meet with Jennie and Tom as mentioned above. \$10,000 is being dedicated to this project. They are totally behind the project. They want the cooperation of

the State teams involved. Also want the plan in front of this land board. Very productive meeting with great buy in to our planning process. Met with other staffers which also was beneficial.

Discussion of preparation for May 17 Land Board Meeting in which Leesa and Andy are going to Helena to give an update on the committee progress and ask for an extension to October.

Public Comment

Bick Smith asked if the DNRC has more funds to add to the pot. Section 36 was paid by DNRC to do a full neighborhood plan. This will be researched.

Motion approved to adjourn meeting at 7:47 PM.